

Post 10/23/71

Firebombs Increase Memphis

MEMPHIS, Tenn., Oct. 22 (UPI)—The death of a black child under the wheels of a unmarked police cruiser and the firebombing of a lounge jammed with whites deepened racial tensions today in this river city.

Attendance dropped sharply at a half-dozen schools and about 400 blacks boycotted Memphis Technical High.

Police reported four young blacks set a trash fire at one school and left the building telling school authorities, "We'll be back to burn the place down."

Five persons, including two women, were badly burned in the firebombing of the lounge. One man remained confined today in the intensive care unit of Baptist Hospital with burns over half of his body.

The violence started Tuesday night after the funeral of Elton Hayes, a 17-year-old black youth who died of a crushed skull following a police chase. Police first reported Hayes had been injured when his vehicle crashed during the chase, but District Attorney General Phil Canale later said he was investigating the possibility of homicide.

Twenty-three police officers have been relieved of their duties pending outcome of the investigation.

After two nights of firebombing and other street violence, the situation appeared to be quieting down Thursday night when a police car, responding to a call, struck and killed three-year-old Robert Reed, Jr.

"The accident was simply unavoidable," Police Inspector W. O. Crumby said. "The child darted in front of the second car of one of our four-car tactical units."

Cruisers have been traveling in "tactical units" in order to protect each other in case a call leads them into a trouble zone.

Witnesses said both the lead car and the second car were traveling without headlights,

Tension



Associated Press

One man, listed by Memphis police as critically injured, lies on a stretcher as a woman is helped into a fire department ambulance after a napalm-type firebombing of

a crowded cafe Thursday on the third night of civil disorder. Police said five persons, including two women, were badly burned when at least three bombs entered the cafe.

although both were displaying flashing blue lights.

News of the child's death created new turmoil, and about midnight three firebombs were hurled into the Red Lantern lounge, then crowded with about 60 whites.

Fire Chief E. A. Hamilton said a soap powder had apparently been mixed with the ga-

soline in the manufacture of the bombs. "The stuff was like napalm," he said. "Where it splattered, it stuck."

Lounge manager Eugene Stanton said he was behind the bar when "I heard a popping sound and people screaming, and then everybody ran for the door."

Officials said one of the

bombs—whisky bottles filled with the gasoline-soap mixture—fell beside a table where two women and several men were sitting. When the bottle broke, the flaming liquid exploded and hit the victims on the arms, faces, and legs.

The victims were identified as Frank Deaton, 34, Atoka, Tenn., listed in fair condition;

Thomas Lee Sims, 35, Brighton, Tenn., listed in serious condition with burns over 60 per cent of his body; Jack Mallory, 24, Memphis, who suffered burns over 20 per cent of his body; Linda Massey, 23, Atoka, burns over 30 per cent of her body and Mamie Thomas, 18, Memphis, burns over 20 per cent of her body.